

The Corporations Special Privileges

The removal of causes from state to federal courts is, just now, attracting considerable attention. Writing to The Commoner on this subject Platt Hubbell of Trenton, Mo., says:

"The jurisdiction of the federal courts, in connection with the railroads, presents another feature of 'special privilege' which has been overlooked by many well thinking people. This 'special privilege' has arisen by reason of the wrongful and oppressive jurisdiction that has been vested in federal courts by the congress of the United States, and which jurisdiction inures to the benefit of the railroads, and for the railroads, and is, no doubt, procured by the railroads. An illustration will, perhaps, best explain our meaning. When a citizen, an average citizen, of a state, be it Missouri, Nebraska, or any other state, is sued for \$2,000 or any other amount in the local court of his state, he must try his case in a court of the state, and abide by the decision of a court of the state. He can not remove the cause, without a trial, to the federal court.

"A railroad corporation that is not incorporated in a given state, may remove a cause involving more than \$2,000, to the federal court, without any trial at all in the state court. To illustrate: The C. B. & Q. railroad is not incorporated in the state of Nebraska. Under the present law, enacted by congress, when the C. B. & Q. railroad is sued for more than \$2,000, in a state court, it can remove the case to a federal court. Without any trial at all, the C. B. & Q. railroad can remove a case involving more than \$2,000, to the federal court and take it away from the state court. The same 'special privilege' is accorded to many other railroads besides the C. B. & Q. We only mention the name of this one as an illustration.

"A railroad corporation, not incorporated in any given state, has a special privilege that the ordinary person has not. Thus the railroad corporation has all the benefits of citizenship in a state, without the burdens of citizenship. It occurs to us that if a given state is good enough for the railroads to transact business in, and to earn money in, then the state is also good enough for its courts to pass on the rights and liabilities of the railroads. When a railroad not incorporated in a given state, is sued for more than \$2,000, it invariably removes the cause out of the state court, to the federal court.

"Why does the railroad remove the case to the federal court? Why is the railroad unwilling to submit itself to jurisdiction of the state court? It is said that a railroad corporation has an advantage over the ordinary individual in the federal court. The expenses of trying a case in the federal court are greater than the expenses in a state court. The railroads are supposed to have some influence in the selection of the judges and officers of the federal courts—and, it is said that railroad influences are more active in and about federal courts than they are in those of the state.

"When an humble laborer of the railroad company is hurt through its fault—and through the fault and hurry of present railroad methods, he must bring his suit for only \$2,000, or he will be dragged off to the federal court where, by reason of his poverty and his inability to meet his

adversary in that court, he may be deprived of everything.

"If the injured man files his suit in a state court, for more than \$2,000 his case will be removed to the federal court and will be removed so far away that he can not pay the expenses of himself and his witnesses in attending the trial—and, even if he could pay all these expenses, the railroad influence around the federal court would be arrayed against him there. He may be maimed for life and damaged to the amount of \$20,000, but this special privilege to the railroad practically deprives him of suing for more than \$2,000.

"The same rule applies to the passenger who is injured through the fault of the railroad company; and, to the farmer whose live stock is damaged in shipment, or otherwise killed or injured; and, to the merchant who has a just claim for goods destroyed; and, all others who have claims against the railroad.

"Congress should pass a law raising the limit to \$20,000. The ordinary litigation, and the ordinary claims, of the people against the railroads, regardless of amount, should be tried in the state courts, instead of requiring the injured party to go to a federal court, or submit to the gross injustice of accepting \$2,000 or less.

"Why should not the country press raise its voice against this evil? Many beneficent reforms have been inaugurated and carried out by the country press. Why not the country press of the United States, regardless of politics, take up the cause of the common people against this 'special privilege' of corporate power?

"Should not the average individual, who pays taxes to procure equal and exact justice for the railroad have the same kind of a court and the same kind of a trial that the railroad has? Should the railroad have any privileges or right that the average individual has not?"

NOT "SPECKY'S" FAULT

The enemies of Von Sternberg, who are trying to make trouble for him because Mr. Roosevelt calls him "Specky," don't know the president. If he ever happened to meet the kaiser, and took a fancy to him, he wouldn't hesitate for a minute to call him Bill.—Louisville Times.

'BOUT JONAH

There's lots of talkin' now-a-days
'Bout Jonah and the whale;
'Bout how the story's all made up—
A most unlikely tale.
Great men that folks consider smart
Say that no man could stay
Inside a fish's stomach so
For three hull days, noway.

I ain't much good convincin' folks;
To argue I've no wish.
But th' Bible says as plain as day
That th' Lord' prepared a fish.
It prob'ly was a special kind
Made purpose for the man

Who, told by God to go and preach,
Felt faint, and away he ran.

Our Lord prepared this glorious earth,
Made mountains' sky and sea.
That he prepared a great big fish
Don't seem so strange to me.
"Canst thou by searchin' find out God?"
Though you spend each hour;
Nor can you measure by your own
The Lord Almighty's power.

I want the hull of the good book;
I love it's ev'ry tale—
'Bout Joseph's coat, 'bout poor old Job,
'Bout Jonah and the whale.
So folks may keep on talkin',
And doubtin' if they wish;
I b'lieve just what the Bible says,
That the Lord prepared a fish.
ROSE C. WEBB.

LOOKOUT!

The interstate commerce commission's final hearing in the refrigerating cases came to a sudden end when the chief witnesses refused to answer. Don't give the commission any power. It might find out something.—Minneapolis Journal.

There are a lot of people who manufacture heavy crosses for themselves in order to gain sympathy when they carry them in public.—Exchange.

BETTER THAN SPANKING

Spanking does not cure children of bed wetting. If it did there would be few children that would do it. There is a constitutional cause for this. Mrs. M. Summers, Box 118, Notre Dame, Ind., will send her home treatment to any mother. She asks no money. Write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child. The chances are it can't help it.



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